His Majesties
GRACIOUS
SPEECH,
Together with the
Lord Chancellors,
To both Houses of
PARLIAMENT,
On *Thursday* the 23d of *May*, 1678.

Published by His Majesties Command.

LONDON,
Printed by *John Bill*, *Christopher Barker*, *Thomas Newcomb* and *Henry Hills*, Printers to the Kings most Excellent Majesty. 1678.

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On *Thursday* the 23d of *May*, 1678.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

WHen I met you last, I asked your Advice upon the great Conjunctures abroad. What return you Gentlemen of the House of Commons made Me, and whether it was suitable to the end I intended (which was the saving

& things remanding & advice of his parliam.t he now limits to & saving of flanders.

of Flanders) I leave it to your ſelves in cold bloud to conſider. Since I asked your Advice, the Conjunctures abroad, and Our Diſtempers (which influenced them ſo much) have driven things violently on towards a Peace, and where they will end I cannot tell, but will ſay this onely to you, That I am reſolved, as far as I am able, to ſave Flanders either by a War, or a Peace, which way ſoever I ſhall find moſt conducing towards it, and that muſt be judged by Circumſtances as they play from abroad. For My own part, I ſhould think being Armed were as neceſſary to make Peace, as War: And therefore if I were able, would keep up My Army and My Navy at Sea for ſome time, till a Peace were concluded, if that muſt be. But becauſe that will depend

depend upon your Supplies, I leave it to you to consider, whether to provide for their Subsistence so long, or for their Disbanding sooner, and to take care in either Case, not to discourage or use ill so many worthy Gentlemen, and brave Men, who came to offer their Lives and Service to their Country upon this occasion, and in pursuit of your own Advices and Resolutions.

to take care of so many worthy, & brave gentlemen may not be discouraged, but to be well rewarded either by continuing them, or disbanding

I must put you likewise in mind of a Branch of Stay Revenue, which is now expiring; and of another greater, which is cut off by a Clause in the Poll Bill; as also of the Two hundred Thousand pounds taken up upon the Credit of the Excise at your request. And I desire your Resolutions may be speedy, because the present necessity requires it; and

for more money.

I shall consent to any reasonable Bill you shall offer Me for the Good and Safety of the Nation.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

I shall say no more, but onely to assure you, whatsoever some ill men would have believed, I never had any Intentions but of Good to you, and to Any People, nor ever shall, but will do all that I can for your Safety and Ease, as far as you your selves will suffer Me. And since these are My Resolutions, I desire you will not drive Me into Extremities, which must end ill both for You and Me, and (which is worst of all) for the Nation, which We ought all to have equal Care of: Therefore I desire We may prevent any Disorders or Mischief that may befall them by Our Disagreement; And in case they do, I shall leave it to God Almighty to Judge

 between

between Us, who is the occasion

One thing more I have to add, and that is, to let you know, That I will never more suffer the [illegible] changed; and that if several Matters shall ever again be Treated together in one Bill, that Bill shall certainly be lost, let the Importance of it be never so great.

He will never more have several matters handled together.

My Lords, and you the Knights, Citizens and Burgesses of the House of Commons,

The rest I leave to My [illegible] to be laid by His Majesties Command, will fall under their Considerations; The present State of Christendom, in reference to a General Peace; Then the Influence that Peace is like to have upon us; And, The necessity of returning to some better kind of Intelligence amongst our selves then we had when we parted last.

The

THE Ld. Chancellors SPEECH.

My Lords, and you the Knights, Citizens and Burgesses of the House of Commons;

THat which remains to be said by His Majesties Command, will fall under these Considerations; The present State of Christendom, in reference to a General Peace; Then the Influence that Peace is like to have upon us; And, The necessity of returning to some better kind of Intelligence amongst our selves then we had when we parted last.

The

The Advances which have been made abroad towards a Peace, though they may have been hastened by some late Occurrences, yet they were long since meditated and prepared there: for when the States General did perceive, that though they had strained themselves to the utmost, and exceeded all the proportions which by their Treaty they were bound to furnish, yet the *Spaniards* failed them in every Point, not onely in the Subsidies they were obliged to pay, but in the very Strength and Forces they stood engaged to set out, insomuch that all their Towns and Garrisons were so far from being in any tolerable posture to receive an Enemy, that they remained as perfectly defenceless as if they were intended to be abandoned, the States resolved to seek all the occasions they could of coming out of the War, and to lay hold on the first that should offer it self.

To this end they did all the last year sollicite His Majesty to endeavour a Peace, and they would then have taken such a Peace as now they seek; But His Majesty thought he had done great Service to the Christian World, when he had gain'd two Points upon them; That to Model and Concert with him the Terms and Articles of a better Peace, and then in prospect of that Peace (and without which

it could never have been gain'd) To enter into a League Offenſive and Defenſive with His Majeſty, to obtain that Peace by force, if it could not be had otherwiſe.

And while things ſtood upon this Foot, and ſome Preparations were making towards it, there was no ſmall hopes of putting a conſiderable ſtop to the Growth of the Power of *France*.

For though the *Dutch* were ſtill inclin'd to accept of Peace, and were hearkening after the *French* Propoſitions at *Nimeguen*, Yet ſuch were His Majeſties reſolutions to hold them to their League, and ſo conſtant were all his refuſals to hearken to ſuch a Peace, or to have any part in it, that they muſt of neceſſity at laſt have been obliged to continue in the War ſome way or other.

But when once it was heard abroad that this League, which was the onely thing by which His Majeſty could oblige the States, had been ſo ill underſtood at home, as to meet with ſome very unfitting and very undeſerv'd Reflections; As ſoon as it had taken air, and they underſtood, that there was a Reſolution to give no Money until ſatisfaction given in matters of Religion, which in all Countreys are the longeſt Debates that can be entred upon, and at this time

time above all others ſhould leaſt have been ſtirr'd; And when at laſt the King had received an Addreſs, which they took to be of ſuch a nature as was never ſeen or heard of before in any State or Kingdom in the World, And had proceeded ſo far as to expreſs his Reſentment of it:

Then they concluded with themſelves, that it was in vain to rely any longer upon *England*, for *England* was no longer it ſelf: Then all Sides began to wiſh for Peace, even *Spain* as well as *Holland*; and if the Ceſſation which is endeavoured to be made in order to it, take effect, as in all likelihood it will, we may conclude that the Peace will ſoon follow.

The Influence ſuch a Peace will have upon Our Affairs, is fitter for Meditation then Diſcourſe: Onely this is evident, That by the Preparations We have made for War, and the Prohibitions We have made of Trade, We have given no ſmall Provocations to a Mighty King, who may be at leiſure enough to reſent them if he pleaſe: And therefore it will import us ſo to Strengthen Our ſelves both at Home and Abroad, That it may not be found a Cheap or Eaſie thing to put an Affront upon Us.

The

The first Step in order to this, is to preserve a State of Peace and Unity at Home, which is now more necessary then ever. He that foments Divisions now, does more Mischief to his Countrey then a Forein Enemy can do, and Disarms it in a time when all the Hands and all the Hearts we have, are but enough to defend Us.

No Fears of Arbitrary Government can justifie, no Zeal to Religion can sanctifie such a Proceeding.

It hath been so stale a Project to Undermine the Government, by accusing it of endeavouring to introduce Popery and Tyranny, that a man would wonder to see it taken up again.

Have We forgotten that Religion and Liberty were never truly lost, till they were made a Handle and Pretence for Sedition? Are We so ill Historians as not to remember when Prelacy was called Popery, and Monarchy Tyranny? When the Property of Nobility and Gentry was held to be destructive of Liberty, and that it was a dangerous thing for men to have any sense of their Duty and Allegiance.

Do we know all this, and suffer men without doors to hope by our Divisions to arrive at the same Times again? Can we endure

to

to ſee men break the Act of Oblivion every day, by reviving the memory of forgotten Crimes in new Practices?

If Fears and Jealouſies can ever become wiſe and good men, it is onely then when there is danger of a relapſe. No caution can be too great againſt the returns of that fatal Diſtemper, from which we have been ſo lately recovered, eſpecially when ſome Symptomes of it begin again to appear in Printed Libels, and in ſeveral parts of the Nation.

It might perhaps be worth our while to conſider, whether we do not bring ſome kind of ſcandal upon the Proteſtant Religion, when we ſeem ſo far to diſtruſt the truth and power of it, that after ſo many Laws that have been paſt to guard it, after all the miraculous deliverances from the attempts which have been made againſt it, we ſhould ſtill be afraid of its continuance.

It is no doubt a duty which we owe to God and to our ſelves, to the preſent Age and to Poſterity, to improve the opportunities God gives us of fencing our Vineyard, and making the Hedge about it as ſtrong as we can. And the King hath Commanded me to tell you, that he is ready to concur with us in any thing of this kind, which ſhall be found wanting, and which the Chriſtian Pru-

dence and Justice of a Parliament can propose as expedient.

But why then do we suffer those abroad to complain of the dangers of Religion, who complain onely for complainings sake?

Hath not the late Act made it impossible, absolutely impossible, for the most concealed Papist that is, to get into any kind of Employment? and did ever any Law since the Reformation give us so great a security as this?

As little cause there is to be Jealous of our Liberties and Properties; nor do they believe themselves who pretend to be afraid of either. Can there be a greater evidence of the Moderation of a Prince, and his Tenderness of the Liberty of the Subject, then to suffer, as he does every day, so much Licentious and Malicious Talk to pass unpunish'd? If there be not any one Instance to be found in a whole Reign, of a Man that hath suffered against Law, and but very few examples of those that have suffered by it, shall we endure them that dare lay in Coffee-houses and in other publick Places, that the Nation is enslaved.

Let it be lawful to provoke and challenge the most discontented and the most seditious Spirit in the Kingdom, to shew that

that time, if he can; ſince the world began, and this Nation was firſt inhabited; wherein there were fewer Grievances, or leſs cauſe of Complaint then there is at this preſent. Nay, give him Scope enough, and let him ſearch all Ages and all Places of the World, and tell Us if he can, when and where there was ever found a happier People then We are at this day.

And if Malice it ſelf ought to bluſh when it makes this Compariſon, what ſtrange Ingratitude both to God and Man are they guilty of, who behave themſelves ſo, as if they could be ill at eaſe under ſo temperate a Government.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

The King will not ſuffer himſelf to believe it poſſible, that you ſhould ever forſake him when any Difficulties or Diſtreſſes are near him; and therefore he doth with great Aſſurance expect your Care to preſerve him in the Affections of his People, as well as your Concurrence to his preſent Supplies.

The Forces which have been Raiſed, and the Ships which have been Set out by your Advice, have been at a vaſt Charge, and yet it will be no ſmall Expence to Diſband them again, and to pay them till they be Diſbanded. That

That Two hundred thouland pounds which was Borrowed at your Requeſt, remains as a Debt upon the King, unleſs you acquit your ſelves of the Obligation which lies upon you to pay it.

That Branch of the Revenue which expires next moneth, will leave the Crown in great want, if it be not continued, and yet the continuance of it will not prove ſo conſiderable a Support as it ought to be: for the Poll-Bill hath Extinguiſhed the Duty upon *French* Wines, and all other Cuſtoms ariſing upon Trade with *France*; and it is worthy of the Care of a Parliament to make this up ſome other way, that ſo His Majeſty may ſee and know that nothing can be loſt by truſting his Parliament.

But the King hath ſo far expreſt himſelf this day, that 'tis evident the Manner of your Proceedings is to him as conſiderable as the Matter; and that he will not accept a good Bill, how valuable ſoever it may be, unleſs it come to him in the old and decent Method of Parliaments.

The late way of tacking together ſeveral Independent and Incoherent Matters in one Bill, ſeems to alter the whole Frame and Conſtitution of Parliaments, and conſequently of the Government it ſelf.

It

It takes away the Kings Negative Voice in a manner, and forces him to take all or none, when sometimes one part of the Bill may be as dangerous for the Kingdom, as the other is necessary.

It takes away the Negative Voice of the House of Peers too by the same consequence, and dismembers the Lords of that Honour they were born to, The Liberty of Debating and Judging what is good for the Kingdom.

It looks like a kind of Defamation of the Government, and seems to suppose the King and House of Lords to be so ill affected to the Publick, that a good Bill cannot carry it self through by the strength of its own reason and justice, unless it be helped forward by being Tackt to another Bill that will be favoured.

It does at last give up the greatest share of Legislature to the Commons, and by consequence the chief power of Judging what Laws are best for the Kingdom.

And yet it is a Priviledge that may be made use of against the Commons, as well as by them: for if this Method hold, what can hinder the Lords at one time or other from taking advantage of a Bill very grateful to the Commons, and much desired by them, to Tack a new Clause to it of some Foreign matter, which shall not be altogether so

grateful, nor ſo much deſired, and then the Commons muſt take all or none too.

Thus every good Bill ſhall be dearly bought at laſt, and one chief end of calling Parliaments, The making of good Laws, ſhall be wholly fruſtrated and diſappointed, and all this by departing from that Method which the Wiſdom of our Anceſtors preſcribed on purpoſe to prevent and exclude ſuch Inconveniences.

Theſe Innovations the King reſolves to abolish, and hath commanded me to ſay to you, *State ſuper vias antiquas.*

My Lords and Gentlemen,

There never did, there never can again, ſo much depend upon the happy ſucceſs of any one Meeting as there does upon this.

If this Seſſion do not repair the Misfortunes and amend the Faults of the laſt, it will look like a Fatality upon the Nation.

If we do not now ſtrengthen the hands of the Government, and ſhame the Enemies of it by baniſhing all manner of diſtruſt, we ſhall be in danger to become, not onely the moſt miſerable, but the moſt unpitied Nation under Heaven.

Let not the whiſpers or evil ſurmiſes of thoſe who lie in wait to deceive, make any man the unhappy occaſion of endangering the Safety of the Government, by miſtruſting it.

He whoſe houſe is deſtroyed by fire, would find but little conſolation in ſaying, the fire did

did not begin by his means; but it will be matter of perpetual anguiſh and vexation of heart, to remember that it was in his power to have extinguiſhed it.

Let the world now ſee that your zeal to preſerve the Government is the ſame it was when you were ready to die for its Reſtoration: And know, 'tis an act as Meritorious, and an act of as great Duty and Loyalty to ſtand between the King and all thoſe practices of Libellers, which tend to create a miſunderſtanding between him and his Parliament, as 'tis to fight for him in a day of Battel.

Embelliſh the Hiſtory of this Parliament, by ſhewing us the healing vertue of this Seſſion: So ſhall your Service be acceptable to the King, who never forgets any thing but Injuries: So ſhall you recommend your ſelves to Poſterity, by tranſmitting to them the ſame Peace and Happineſs you are truſted with.

And the God of Peace and Unity, proſper all your Conſultations to the Honour and Happineſs of the King, and the Joy and Comfort of all his good Subjects.

FINIS.